

REMARKS

The above amendments to the above-captioned application along with the following remarks are being submitted as a full and complete response to the Office Action dated October 20, 2008. In view of the above amendments and the following remarks, the Examiner is respectfully requested to give due reconsideration to this application, to indicate the allowability of the claims, and to pass this case to issue.

Status of the Claims

As outlined above, claims 1, 5, 11, 15, and 17 stand for consideration in this application, wherein claims 2, 8-10, and 12-14 are being canceled without prejudice or disclaimer, while claims 1 and 11 are being amended.

All amendments to the application are fully supported therein, including Figs. 1A-1B. Applicants hereby submit that no new matter is being introduced into the application through the submission of this response.

Claim Objections

Claims 1-2 were objected to on the grounds of informalities.

As mentioned above, claim 2 is being canceled, and thus the objection to claim 2 is moot. Claim 1 is being amended so as to meet formalities. Accordingly, withdrawal of these objections is respectfully requested.

Prior Art Rejections

35 U.S.C. §103(a) Rejections

Claims 1, 2, 5, 15, and 17 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being allegedly unpatentable over Dunn (U.S. Pat. No. 6,021,612) in view of Gelin (U.S. Pub. No. 2003/0070367). Claims 8-14 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being allegedly unpatentable over Dunn in view of Gelin, and further in view of Hoffman (U.S. Pat. No. 4,782,913).

As mentioned above, claims 2, 8-10, and 12-14 are being canceled. Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection of claims 1, 5, 11, 15, and 17 for the reasons set forth below.

A sound absorbing structure utilizing vibration of a plate-like body as recited in claim 1 comprises: a vibration damping member provided on a surface of the plate-like body; and

an installation portion. A first side of the vibration damping member faces the surface of the plate-like body. The installation portion is provided at a second side of the vibration damping member. The second side is opposite to the first side of the vibration member. The vibration damping member and the installation portion are lattice-shaped along the surface of the plate-like body. The installation portion has the same shape as the lattice-shaped vibration damping member. Such a lattice-shaped vibration damping member enables the plate-like body to vibrate while the substantial center of the plate-like body is the center of the vibration, and thus improve sound absorbing performance over a wide frequency range. (See page 10, line 21 – page 11, line 8 of the specification.)

In contrast, as admitted by the Examiner, Dunn fails to teach a vibration damping member provided on a surface of the plate-like body.

Gelin shows strip-shaped studs 101 aligned in parallel to each other and sound-deadening boards 109 positioned on both sides of the studs. (See Fig. 1.) However, as the Examiner admitted, Gelin does not show or suggest lattice-shaped studs and boards.

Hoffman shows a shell 2 carrying webs 3 to form honeycomb cells for supporting a foil system 5 provided with flattered air pockets 6. (See Fig. 2 and col. 3, lines 1-8). However, in Hoffman, since the foil system 5 is so thin and extremely flexible, different sized or irregularly shaped cells with the foil system having the air pockets are used to excite their purely piston-like vibrations in order to achieve sound absorbing performance in a favorable bandwidth. (See col. 3, lines 20-43.) Indeed, the foil system 5 is so thin and extremely flexible that no vibration dampening member is required for allowing the foil system 5 to vibrate on the webs 3. Therefore, at the time the invention was made, one of ordinary skill in the art would not be motivated to provide a vibration dampening member between the webs 3 and the foil system 5 in order to achieve excellent sound absorption over a wide frequency range. Namely, at the time the invention was made, one of ordinary skill in the art could not and would not achieve all the features as recited in claim 1 by modifying Dunn in view of Gelin and Hoffman.

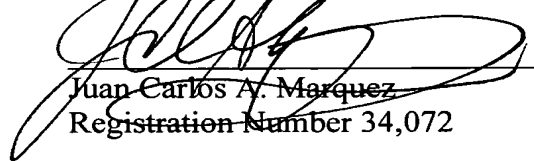
Accordingly, claim 1 and its dependent claims 5, 11, and 17 are not obvious in view of all the prior art cited.

Conclusion

In light of the above Amendments and Remarks, Applicants respectfully request early and favorable action with regard to the present application, and a Notice of Allowance for all pending claims is earnestly solicited.

Favorable reconsideration of this application as amended is respectfully solicited. Should there be any outstanding issues requiring discussion that would further the prosecution and allowance of the above-captioned application, the Examiner is invited to contact the Applicants' undersigned representative at the address and phone number indicated below.

Respectfully submitted,



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